

You Can't Have it All

By

Stuart Goldsmith

I think my strong suit is on smashing illusions, fantasies and myths. The complete twaddle which fills the average person's brain is quite breathtaking. The junk which they sign up for, and the mystical claptrap which they regurgitate believing it to be 'the truth' makes me wonder how they can survive, let alone aspire to success.

Most people barely survive.

Worse still, lacking an iron-grip control on even the basics of their lives, they **mumble the incantations of success**, expecting magical results. That is, **results which do not exact a price or penalty**. But let me stop talking about 'they'. You know, and I know that this is a thinly veiled device used by writers. It could be that I'm talking about *you*.

Here is an approximate breakdown of the population regarding money:

- 1. 5% are comfortable.** They live in a decent house with a small or zero mortgage, they drive a decent car, they take one or two holidays each year. They have enough money for most of the things they need, but they are not wealthy. I would describe them as being in the high end of their comfort zone.
- 2. 65% are scraping along** day-to-day, month to month. Just about paying their way, but there is never any money left over for luxuries. Also, they live in constant fear of the large unexpected bill, tax demand, or medical expense. They are hanging on to the tricky business of life by the fingernails - barely surviving; lurching from crisis to crisis.
- 3. 30% are seconds away from drowning** and are coming up for air for the third time. Their past mistakes and failures have created a crippling burden of debt which they have not the slightest hope of paying back through working at a normal job. **The crushing weight of their errors and the cumulative effect of years of laziness, inaction and stupidity have created a terminal situation.** Each month they sign up again for inaction and myopia. Each month their load becomes a little heavier. Without urgent and immediate action, the outcome is inevitable - *total financial collapse*.

As an aside, I would like you to reread the above paragraph and notice how I place the blame for this situation squarely on the shoulders of the person experiencing it. This is where it belongs of course but it is *unfashionable* to say so.

In a society which seeks to crush individualism and make each one of us a worker in the state collective, how can an *individual* possibly be to blame for his own misfortune? He or she cannot. This would give the individual some personal power, and that cannot be right! So it must be society, greedy capitalists, manipulative industry, bad luck, his upbringing, peer pressure, lack of education, lack of opportunity, or any one of a thousand other factors **all of which are out of his control**. In short, he is not to blame.

If you doubt this, read the following and see if it has a familiar ring:

*“Yes, I admit it. I'm flat broke and I owe tens of thousands of pounds to other people which, to be honest, I don't have a prayer of paying back. But **it's not my fault**. I was made redundant from my job and thrown on the scrap heap at 40. Those greedy bosses call it downsizing - but I don't notice any downsizing in their fat wallets. Twenty years I've worked there, and that's all the thanks I get. I'm a heavy- motor electrical engineer, and there just aren't that many jobs around for someone of my abilities. I've applied for a few but they always want younger men. I guess losing my job made me kinda depressed and my wife couldn't take it. She wants a divorce and the bitch is taking me for every penny. I don't have any savings, and the money I get from the state is a joke. Sure I'm broke, but as you can see **it's not my fault**.”*

Let me translate this litany of blame shifting.

*“I am such a weak and feeble human being, that I have been unable to master one of the simplest and most basic skills of life; that is **to spend less than I earn**. My greed exceeds my means to pay for it, and so to fuel my desires, I must **borrow from the surplus created by others**. I have spent every penny of my own money, and squandered the surplus created by others which they entrusted to me on the promise that I would pay them back. I have broken that trust and they are unlikely to get their money. I am not a trustworthy human being, **but it's not my fault**.”*

*“I know that the world is a dangerous and uncertain place, but for twenty years I decided to ignore that fact. Consequently I have zero savings, **but it isn't my fault**. I needed all the stuff I bought, and a lot more besides. I did some training once, twenty years ago, and I fully expected that to last forty years.*

“The world owes me a living, and society should provide jobs for people with my abilities, regardless of whether they are needed or not. Bosses should provide jobs for workers regardless of profits. People need jobs, and it is the duty of bosses to provide them regardless. I have no intention of retraining. I have made a half-hearted attempt to get another job, but because I'm weak, I get quickly discouraged and so I have given up. Now I get free money from the state. This is nothing like enough for me to live on, and I think the state should give me a lot more free money.”

I know you do not hold the same attitudes as this man - you would not be one of my readers if you did!

In my writings, I always assume one thing. I make one presumption. **That you wish to be successful - however you define success**. But I'm not letting you off the hook with some mystical, wishy-washy definition of success which allows you to cop-out of making some money.

Why? Because money is a fantastic enabling force. It will buy you almost any version of success which your mind can dream up!

We all need our health, and money can't really buy that (it sure helps though!); but that's a trite observation which applies to rich and poor, the successful and the aspiring. Apart from health, money can buy 99.99% of any sick little dream your warped mind can imagine! There's just no getting away from it. Sure you'll hear people saying that: *“Success is whatever you want it to be man, I mean, like, if smoking dope all day is your thing, man, then right-on! know what I mean. Innit.”*

But whatever they are talking about, you know and I know **they are not talking about success.**

In order to be a successful individual you need to *know what you want*. That is the starting place.

So let's talk for a moment about what you want out of life.

I want you to get your thinking crystal-clear on this subject. **It is vital that you apply full focus to this very important area if you're not to drift through life aimlessly.**

So, it's time for some home truths. **Nobody else will tell you these things apart from me.**

You Can't Have it All

The first thing you have to know is that you can't have it all.

Despite what those slick-suited seminar-mongers tell you, every decision you take in life has a shadowy partner - the life you *cannot* now lead because you took that decision.

A few simple examples will prove the point.

You take a career decision to become a surgeon; but this precludes you from also being a lawyer. As a woman you decide to marry Steve Sheep and bear him many baa-lambs. The consequence is that your work career is on hold for a minimum of five years and more like fifteen. You decide to go to the cinema; you cannot also spend the evening in a fine restaurant. You decide to give up drinking; you cannot now go boozing with your pals. You decide to start thinking for yourself; you lose most of your 'friends' and are viewed as an oddball.

Every decision has consequences.

Every decision, no matter how seemingly inconsequential, sets your life on a slightly different course. This is why, as Jim Rohn says, "Everything matters".

Even *inaction* has its consequences.

If you 'decide' just to float down life's stream, and the current sweeps you randomly into the left tributary, you cannot also enjoy the right tributary. This tiny handful of examples should prove to you immediately that **you cannot have it all**. It is so obvious that it is hardly worth saying, and yet there are at least two top seminar gurus on the circuit at the moment who are claiming that you can. In fact, I'm fairly certain that I have seen a book and a CD series entitled "You CAN have it all". (In fact I've just entered that into Amazon. Have a go yourself – there are a dozen books with that exact title!)

I'm here to tell you you *can't* have it all. But far more importantly, every decision you take to improve your life, no matter how trivial, will have an associated cost. Some price that you will have to pay in order to achieve that success. The 'price' usually involves the **sacrifice of one aspect of your life, in order to achieve more in your main area of endeavour.**

Simple example. You're a single guy, and you decide to spend every evening for the next three months decorating and improving your house from top to bottom in order that you might sell it for the best price. This will allow you to realise your goal of moving up the housing market. You really want a detached house and have a burning desire to move out of the poverty-stricken terraced-house neighbourhood in which you live. Great goal! But **you can't have it all**, so what is the price that you will pay for this?

Answer?

It will kill your social life for the next three months. No drinking, no clubbing, no frittering away your time with the mates. Who knows? You might have met your future wife at one of those missed evenings at the club. But instead you were home working.

The pathways of your life divide. You follow one which leads to a brighter, better tomorrow (according to your best judgement, of course). The other diverges sharply, blinks and shimmers uncertainly before fading out to join the countless millions of other 'might have beens'.

Another example: Jane sets herself the goal of becoming super successful; really mega-rich. This woman wants £100 million, **she wants it badly and she's going to get it**.

Now ask yourself seriously, can this woman have it all?

Can she work the demanding 12 hour days, 360 days each year (which are required to achieve this level of success) and be a perfect mother who never misses her son's football matches or her daughter's clarinet concert? Can she be a perfect spouse who is always home from the office by 5:30 to greet her husband, who's never later for a dinner party with friends? Can she shoot for super success and also be a competent cook, gardener and interior designer of her house?

Let's go further. Can she try for mega-wealth, and also be a 'good old pal' to a bunch of girlfriends down at the local? Can she play for the darts' team Tuesdays and Thursdays? Can she say 'yes' to a ten day skiing holiday with her pals?

Let us probe deeper. Will others consider her to be a reliable friend? In other words, are people likely to say of her *"Good old Jane, she's a real pal. You've only got to pick up the phone any hour of the day or night and she's there for you."* **I don't think so, do you?** Jane is on a fast track to super-success; this track is not open to any old mooch or bum, **it requires extraordinary discipline and focus**. It requires 100% commitment; and total dedication to the task in hand. This level of success commands a high price, not surprisingly, otherwise every half-witted, unfocused dork in the country would be doing it.

Whilst we are on the subject, let us ask "Will Jane have many, or indeed *any*, friends?"

Friendship has a high time-overhead, in case you haven't noticed. You have to call each friend at least once a week and meet them at least once a fortnight, otherwise they fairly rapidly drop out of your circle of mates. With only a dozen chums, you will find that most evenings and weekends, indeed *almost every spare moment you have*, will be consumed in meeting mates for a drink, chatting on the telephone to catch up with all the gossip, coffee mornings, driving endlessly to and fro from their drab houses, dandling their squawking brats on your knee and going "coochy-coo", letter writing, e-mails and returning mutual favours.

Your life is thus reduced to working, sleeping, and *entertainment* (socialising). It would not be overstating the case to say that this describes most people's lives. Nothing wrong with that, if the major life-goal you have set yourself is “to be a good old pal to as many people as humanly possible.” But can you do this *and* be a super success? Can Jane shoot for her 100 million, and be the person I just described?

Can Jane have it all?

The answer is tritely obvious. No. If she is to achieve her dream, **she must pay the price.**

It is important for you to realise that every goal you set in life has an associated price which you will have to pay. Big dreams come with a large, fancy, gold-embossed price tag. Smaller goals have a cheap supermarket stick-on label, but there is still a price attached.

You cannot have it all.

I hope you have taken this on board, and now believe it totally. You cannot move beyond this point in your personal development if even a small part of you still subscribes to the fantasy of being able to have it all. *You cannot.*

Neither can you have something for nothing. You get no results in life unless you pay the price. No free lunches. No 'emanations from the bountiful universe'. Sorry - it doesn't work like that, much as we would all want it to. And lots of different books all scamming people with this ludicrous concept do not make it any more real.

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